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Note: This article was revised to contain web addresses that conform to the new CMS web site and to show they are now MLN Matters articles. All other information remains the same.

New Educational Products Available on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage – The Eighth in the MLN Matters Series

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, health care professionals, providers, suppliers, and staff who provide service to people with Medicare

Important Points to Remember

- On January 1, 2006, new prescription drug coverage will be available to all people with Medicare.
- It will cover brand name and generic drugs.
- Drugs that are currently covered by Medicare Part B will continue to be covered by Part B.
- This new drug coverage is not automatic - all people with Medicare will need to make a decision this fall. Since you're a trusted source, your patients may turn to you for information about this new coverage. Therefore, we're looking to you and your staff to take advantage of this "teachable moment" and help your Medicare patients learn more about this new coverage.
- You should encourage all your Medicare patients to learn more about the new prescription drug coverage because it may save them money on prescription drugs. There is extra help available for people with limited income and resources.

Medicare prescription drug coverage under Part D will be administered through Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans (MA-PDs) and Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs). For Medicare beneficiaries who join a MA-PD or a PDP, their provider must have a contractual relationship with that MA-PD or PDP to bill and receive payment from the plans for that individual's covered prescription drugs. FFS providers cannot bill Medicare fiscal intermediaries (FIs) or carriers for Part D covered drugs. Our next article in this series will provide further information on Part B versus Part D billing.

Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents.

- If your Medicare patients ask you questions about the new coverage, you can refer them to 1-800-MEDICARE and to <http://www.medicare.gov> for additional information and assistance.

New Products Available

New products are available to download at the *Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Information for Providers* web page. This page is dedicated to providing the latest drug coverage information for Fee-For-Service (FFS) Medicare providers. The new products include the following:

Medicare Rx Training Course: Important Information for Health Care Professionals – Earn CME Credit

This training course covers important information about Medicare prescription drug coverage, including the fundamental components of the program, types of drug plans available, resources for people with Medicare and health care professionals, and important dates in 2005 and 2006.

The University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) is offering Continuing Education Credit for this course in coordination with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):

- **Doctors:** 1.5 CME Category 1 Credit
- **Nurses:** 1.8 CNE Contact Hours
- **Other Health Care Professionals:** 1.5 Credit Hours

Once you complete the course and receive a passing score on the post-assessment, you will be provided with a link to KUMC. KUMC will charge a nominal fee for credit courses.

Physician Brochure

This publication explains the new Medicare prescription drug coverage for physicians and their staff.

Physician Tear-off Sheet

This resource is appropriate for distribution in physicians' offices and other clinical settings. It contains basic information on the new coverage, as well as contact numbers for each state's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). The SHIPs will direct people with Medicare to resources for individual counseling.

"Have Limited Income? SSA Can Help" - Posters for Your Office or Clinic

These posters direct people with Medicare who have limited income and resources to sources for help with prescription drug costs. The posters are suitable for display in healthcare settings where people with Medicare and their caregivers will see the information. To view and order the posters, go to http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/23_drugcoverage.asp on the CMS web site.

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New Beneficiary Publications Available

New publications for people with Medicare that explain various aspects of the new coverage are available at <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/home.asp> on the CMS web site.

Additional Information

To find Medicare Prescription Drug Plans available in each state, visit the Landscape of Local Plans on the Medicare web site for a complete listing.

You can use the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder to help people with Medicare learn about the new Medicare prescription drug coverage, find and compare prescription drug plans that meet personal needs, and enroll in the prescription drug plan that is right for him/her.

The new Formulary Finder on the Medicare web site will help people with Medicare find plans in each state that match their required drug lists.

Bookmark the Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Information for Providers page, http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/23_drugcoverage.asp for the latest information and educational resources.

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